

P A I S L E Y.

A P O E M.

11632. P. 58
4

B E I N G

A GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE
TOWN AND PLACES ADJACENT;

W I T H

THE MANNERS AND CHARACTER
OF THE INHABITANTS.

BY JAMES MAXWELL,

AUTHOR OF THE NEW VERSION OF THE
PSALMS, ETC. ETC. ETC.

P A I S L E Y:

PRINTED BY JOHN NEILSON,
FOR THE AUTHOR.

M.DCC.LXXXV.

IN TESTIMONY
OF THE HIGHEST ESTEEM
FOR THE HONOURABLE
THE MAGISTRATES,
TREASURER,
AND THE WORTHY MEMBERS
OF THE TOWN-COUNCIL;
FOR
THE MINISTERS,
MANUFACTURERS, MERCHANTS,
MECHANICS,
AND ALL
THE INHABITANTS OF PAISLEY;
AND OF
THE WARMEST WISHES
FOR THE
PROSPERITY OF THE TOWN,
THE FOLLOWING POEM
IS MOST RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED
TO ALL RANKS IN IT,
BY THEIR FELLOW-CITIZEN,
AND VERY HUMBLE SERVANT,

JAMES MAXWELL.



46-9-4-719

PAISLEY.

A P O E M.

ASSIST me, O ye heav'nly Pow'rs Divine,
In this my humble, faithful, just design,
While I the much heav'n-favour'd Town survey
Descriptively; let truth direct my way:
Let flattery false for ever fly from hence,
And ev'ry line fill up with solid sense.
Only let truth, with honesty appear,
Throughout my piece like sun-beams bright and clear:
While PAISLEY I with verity describe,
And justly speak of ev'ry place and tribe;
Its situation, buildings, soil and trade,
With apt remarks that may thereon be made.
But, ah! unequal to this task am I,
Unless assisted by the Pow'rs on high.
With trembling hand the arduous task I shun,
Yet from the impulse find no pow'r to run.
The noble theme I therefore mean to try
Depending on assistance from on high.

Of PAISLEY sing, my Muse, how richly blest!
Superior far to all the neighb'ring west.
Its situation fixt, by Heav'n's decree,
On easy rising ground, whence men may see
The neighb'ring country far and near around,
In temp'rate air and pleasant fertile ground.
The summer's heat unscorching when the sun
Does to the north his outmost summit run;
And in the winter here the chilling frost
Hath much of its severest sharpness lost;

As likewise here the rich prolific soil
 Rewardeth well the painful plowman's toil.
 Thus much for situation, soil and air,
 For which few places may herewith compare.

The buildings various, fitted to each trade,
 The spacious streets with good hard metal laid ;
 But should I tell how PAISLEY is increast
 In fifty years, 'twould seem a flatt'ring jest.
 Few would believe in such a space of years
 That multiplied by twenty it appears ;
 But some, who know the truth as well as I,
 Will say, that far within the bounds I lie ;
 Tho' twice I saw it burnt down to the ground
 And but few standing houses therein found :
 But since that time it flourish'd with such speed
 As doth almost mankind's belief exceed.

Now to describe the num'rous streets herein
 Is such a task I dare not here begin :
 Nor to describe the greatness of its trade,
 And men who have such princely fortunes made—
 Are tasks too arduous for my slender Muse,
 These I decline lest I my theme abuse ;
 Yet I suppose no town on British ground
 Hath for the time a trade more ample found—
 Long may she flourish, and her trade secure,
 Her sons be virtuous, and her virgin's pure ;
 And may it ever be of PAISLEY said,
 The gospel flourishes as well as trade.

Here doth the source of brightest genius dwell :
 For handy-craft, no place can this excel ;
 Especially the Weaver's art and skill
 Do all beholders with amazement fill.
 Thousands of weavers here with skilful hand
 Send works of wonder into ev'ry land.
 These make her trade throughout the world extend,
 With admiration to its utmost end :
 For silk, for linen, muslin, lawns and thread,
 Her works do almost ev'ry place exceed,
 Nor only cotton-weaving, but for spinning,
 Tho' this is but in infancy beginning,

Yet are the mills and engines so contriv'd,
No place to such perfection e'er arriv'd.

Nor do the weavers only here excel,
But men of various crafts in PAISLEY dwell,
Famous for art, each in his proper sphere,
As may be prov'd to demonstration clear.
Smiths, masons, wrights, yea, taylor and shoemakers,
With tallow-chandlers, butchers, brewers, bakers;
Yea, ev'ry trade found here of ev'ry name,
Have all obtained much deserved fame:
Nor only men of trades find here employ,
But ev'ry man and woman, girl and boy.

Nor do the learn'd professions less excel,
Who in this famous Town of PAISLEY dwell:
The doctors, writers, and the grave divines,
Each in his sphere with highest lustre shines.
School-masters too, who have the care of youth,
Are men of learning, probity and truth.

And over all the ranks distinguish'd here,
The Magistrates the highest honours bear;
Who rule o'er all with just and upright laws
To curb the wicked, plead the injur'd's cause.

Here men of wealth have shewn their charity
When many poor, in dearth, were like to die *.
Large contributions were among them made,
Which gave relief to numbers lacking bread.
Like holy *Job*, on whom the blessing came
Of him who was in woful wants extreme,
Ready to perish by pale hunger's jaws
Till that blest man remov'd the threat'ning cause.
So these good men the blessings well deserve
Of many, who were at the point to starve.

Thus would I glance at ev'ry several sort,
And every class endeavour to report;
With truth and uprightness to speak their praise,
Without a false, without a flatt'ring phrase.
Allow me now to give a gen'ral sketch,
So far as mod'rate brevity will reach.

A 3.

* Referring to the contributions made by the gentlemen, for the relief of the poor, in the end of 1782 and 1783.

The people here are sober, decent, clean,
 With habit good as any to be seen
 In any place within the British coast;
 This may be said without a flatt'ring boast.
 The men for genius none can them outdo,
 And this their handy-craft will plainly shew.
 The women, modest, virtuous, chaste and fair,
 So that few places may with them compare.
 The gen'ral character of people here,
 Are honest, sober, pious and sincere.
 Yet after all the truth that can be said,
 Exceptions must to common rules be made:
 Nor can it e'er be thought so great a throng
 Can all be good; no bad ones them among.
 No; this can ne'er be said of any place
 On this side heav'n, among our fallen race.
 Some will be honest, some will prove a cheat,
 So tares will always grow among the wheat,
 Until the harvest: that decisive day
 Will save the wheat and drive the tares away.

Thus far describes the body of the place,
 So justly fam'd among the human race.
 Now for the suburbs that around it lie,
 The Muse would only speak with verity.
 There's *Maxwelltown* and all the Gallowgreen,
 Which only pasture was for cattle seen;
 And that but in a few past fleeting years,
 Now like a stately town the whole appears:
 Nor only buildings of the meaner sort,
 But fit for gentlemen that grace a court:
 And ware-houses, for occupying trade,
 Genteel as tho' they were for nobles made.

At *Castlehead*, behold, a Dome quite new,
 Which hath o'er all the rest a pleasant view.
 The situation is so wisely fixt,
 For usefulness and ornament commixt:
 And all the building of the nicest taste,
 With orchard fair and garden near it plac'd.
 O *Maxwelltown*! behold, thy Founder here,
 Who built thy walls when times were most severe;

Provisions dear, and work exceeding scant,
 And many people sore reduc'd to want :
 These he employ'd who were in greatest need,
 And thus were they supply'd with daily bread,
 For which they ought to pray for *Castlehead*. }

And hence a little further to the west,
 Stands *Millerstown*, near joining to the rest :
 A stately town, of no ignoble frame,
 Tho' from a miser it deriv'd its name.

But let us now return to the north-east,
 Where we shall find a wing of noble taste.
 The *Sneddon* it is call'd ; but how it came
 First to obtain that odd ambiguous name,
 Is yet to me a secret quite unknown,
 Yet is it now become a noble town ;
 And to the body now adjoin'd so close,
 That there is now no vacancy nor loss.
 This wing, I think, as many people show
 As PAISLEY did but fifty years ago ;
 Tho' rear'd almost within a score of years,
 Now like a stately city it appears ;
 And greater trade herein is carried on,
 Than was in PAISLEY fifty years ago.

But let us now pass o'er the river *Cart*
 To see another great and noble part,
 Which lies a little farther to the east,
 There shall we find a town of noble taste,
 Styl'd the *New Town* ; and justly so 'tis nam'd,
 And ought to be in lasting records fam'd ;
 For new it is ; uprear'd in few years time
 And is become illustriously sublime.
 The houses here are built of fine hewn-stone,
 Both high and elegant to look upon.
 And some of them, for beauty and delight,
 Have checquer'd fronts of curious black and white.
 Yea, here's an Inn built by great ABERCORN,
 Which doth the town amazingly adorn.
 'Tis such an Inn as is not to be seen
 Within the British coasts where I have been ;

Not *London* can its parallel produce
 For elegance, for beauty, and for use.
 A noble Bank establish'd here likewise
 Which town and country round with cash supplies.

At little distance stands the fair *Greenlaw*,
 One of the neatest Domes I ever saw,
 For situation it is plac'd on high,
 And strikes with pleasure each beholder's eye;
 It shines so radiant, with a peerless white,
 Amazingly it strikes the dazzling sight.
 Nor doth it only thus afar appear,
 But fairer still when we approach it near.
 Nor is the Dome alone so pure and bright
 But ev'ry thing around it yields delight.
 The walks, the offices, and gardens fair,
 Few places can with it for taste compare.
 Nor is it only wond'rously design'd,
 But executed with judicious mind.

Thus hath the Muse endeavour'd to describe
 PAISLEY at large, with ev'ry several tribe:
 Nor must the public buildings be forgot,
 And first the *Abbey-church* of oldest note;
 The age whereof is very hard to tell,
 Yet all may see it doth for age excel.
 This was at first a nest of *Friars* and *Monks*,
 And foolish people fill'd with cash their trunks,
 Yea, wond'rous tracts of land to them were giv'n,
 All with a blinded zeal to purchase heav'n,
 And num'rous gifts, O strange surprising story!
 To pray their fathers out of *purgatory*.
 But thanks to Heav'n, these horrid priestcraft arts
 Are banish'd now from these enlighten'd parts:
 Yea, they and all their priestly tricks accurst,
 And all their ill got gains are reimburs't;
 And in their stead, long since, hath taken place
 The glorious gospel of redeeming grace.

Well I remember since no church was found
 In PAISLEY, nor the country far around,
 Save this alone; here all could sit and hear
 The gospel preach'd, with an attentive ear.

And now here's eight or nine, most of them large,
 Yet half the people would them all surcharge.
 From this short hint it may be fairly guess
 How wond'rously the Town is now increas't.
 But to describe them all distinct and clear,
 I am afraid would tire my reader's ear :
 Yet surely these deserve the chiefest place
 Where is dispens'd the word of heav'nly grace.

The *High-Church* here deserves the first renown,
 Which is an ornament to all the Town :
 The building large, compact, convenient, clear,
 Wherein three thousand may the gospel hear ;
 The workmanship exceeding clean and neat,
 Well plann'd and finish'd to the meanest seat.
 Almost an equal square the building stands,
 All of hewn stone, well wrought with curious hands.
 On highest ground 'tis built, with lofty spire,
 Which people far and near see and admire ;
 From whence we have a most extensive view
 Of rivers, lands and towns both old and new.
 Yea, hence, whichever way we turn our eye
 A noble prospect we at large descry.
 If to the north we first direct our sight,
 We see a vale of wonder and delight.
 Yea, here two winding rivers gently glide,
 Both navigable, namely, *Cart* and *Clyde* ;
 Here vessels pass and repass up and down,
 To and from *Glasgow*, and to *PAISLEY Town*.
 In sweet meanders, lo, these rivers play
 Thro' fruitful fields and meadows cloth'd with hay ;
 By means whereof our heavy goods are brought,
 Or sent to sea, with quick and easy fraught.
 And just beyond this famous river *Clyde*,
 A ridge of hills lie with a sloping side
 Toward the south, and fairly in our view,
 Large fields of corn, and herds of cattle too :
 Yea, herds and flocks abundantly here graze,
 And on the sunny bank the lambkin plays.
 If down the river west we turn our eyes
 Fresh wonders still attract us with surprise.

Dumbarton see on banks of *Clyde* and *Lev'n*,
 With its strong castle tow'ring towards heav'n.
 This castle is by art and nature too
 The most impregnable this land can shew.
 By nature, lo, the rock doth upright rise,
 With hoary head, toward the azure skies
 Just in a sandy flat, behold it stands
 Rais'd by the great Almighty Maker's hands ;
 Almost encompass'd by the sea all round,
 The sight whereof doth ev'ry foe confound.
 Thus far by nature, but behold, by art
 'Tis safely fortify'd in ev'ry part
 By steps of stairs they to the top ascend
 Where guns and batt'ries strong the fort defend ;
 And in the rock large magazines are laid,
 So that of foes they never are afraid.

Now south from hence, and westward to our view,
Kilbarchan stands, and *Bridge* of *Johnston* too :
 Places grown famous for their wond'rous trade,
 Where curious goods of various kinds are made.
Kilbarchan, for its linens, cambrics, lawns,
 Which shew the wonders of the weaver's hands ;
 Not *France* could ever fairer goods produce,
 Nor better finish'd up for mankind's use.
 And *Johnston Bridge* is grown a famous town,
 Newly erected, where no town was known.
 Here cotton mills are curiously contriv'd
 From whence are wealth and honour both deriv'd.
 Such quantities of cotton here are spun,
 So fine, that ev'n the *Indies* are out-done.

But now 'tis time this subject to adjourn,
 And back to *Clyde* our wond'ring fancy turn.
 Yea, up the river, eastward, let us view
 The famous city, *Glasgow*, and *Renfrew*.
 To *Glasgow* let us turn our roving sight,
 'Twill fill our minds with wonder and delight.
Glasgow a city for commercial trade,
 Upon the banks of *Clyde* so sweetly spread :
 Whose traffic reaches to the *Indian* shores,
 Enrich'd with foreign and domestic stores ;

The mart of nations ! home and foreign trade,
Whereby its merchants are like nobles made.
But to recount the num'rous wonders here
Would overcharge the Muse and tire the ear.

Now to the south, if we but cast our eye,
We shall a large and fruitful country spy ;
And lo, the spacious Town lies just below
Of PAISLEY, which makes here a noble show,
With all its num'rous streets, and buildings fine
Erected here, with noble just design—
But I must stop my bold advent'rous song,
Lest this my episode be deem'd too long ;
And back return to mine adopted theme,
Which is to celebrate the noble fame
Of all the public buildings which appear
For ornament and use erected here.

The Middle church comes now in order next,
Which is but just below the High church fixt.
A noble building, spacious, new and neat,
In form the same, altho' not quite so great,
Yet is it so commodious, neat and clear,
Two thousand people may the gospel hear.

The Lower church is also large and fine,
Altho' not of so modern a design,
Because in Town the first erected here
Yet doth a venerable aspect wear.
It holds about as many as the last
Describ'd before, tho' not so new a cast,
These with the Abbey church make four in all,
Of what we of th' establishment may call.
Moreover, PAISLEY now can also shew
The Burghers, and the Antiburghers too.
And each of them considerably large,
Whereof a Pastor takes of each the charge.
Yea, Glassites too, and ancient Mountaineers,
These last in the Bereans room appears.

Nor are these all ; behold, the last, the chief,
A noble Church erected for relief !
Because in those which are establish'd here,
Room was not found for all the people near.

Nor is there yet sufficient room by far,
 Which doth great numbers from the church debar.
 Yet is this last so spacious and so clear,
 Two thousand may at once the gospel hear.
 It also stands within a spacious wall,
 With session-house, the noblest of them all.
 Here likewise is convenient burying ground,
 Where numbers wait for the last trumpet's sound.
 Now of this church it can be truly said,
 By those who saw its first foundation laid,
 And now behold it finish'd so complete,
 They may with truth these foll'wing lines repeat.

When we survey the hand of Providence,
 So far surpassing all our views of sense,
 We may, with *Moses*, wonder and admire
 The burning bush, yet unconsum'd with fire !
 From weak beginnings, when they're well design'd,
 God makes them prosper ev'n beyond our mind.
 Who could have thought, when means so weak appear'd,
 That such a noble structure would be rear'd ?
 Well may we say, with pleasure and surprise,
 God's work this is, and wond'rous in our eyes !
 To see things now, so decent, so complete,
 Would make ev'n Satan and his agents fret.
 When *Nehemiah* did, by means so weak,
 Rebuilding of *Jerus'lem* undertake.
 How did his adversaries mock and jeer ?
 But never thought his grand design would bear.
 Yet when they saw the work almost complete,
 How did their very inwards pine and fret !
 Yet could they not the pious work impede,
 Till was with joy the very top-stone laid.
 But had not God succeeded, all the cost
 And pains to build that city had been lost.
 So may it well be said concerning you
 Who rais'd this noble structure, large and new,
 Had not the Lord upon your labour smil'd,
 Your expectations had been all beguil'd.
 But he hath crown'd your work with great success,
 For which his name, I hope, you'll ever bless.

'Twas he, no doubt, who put it in your minds,
 And hath so well succeeded your designs,
 So hath it been by his all-wise dispose,
 That such a faithful pastor you have chose.
 This was the gift of Providence divine,
 Sent to complete your great and good design;
 Long may he live, and still the truth defend,
 And bless, O Lord, his labours to the end.
 Long may he live, and may his joys increase,
 To see his labours crown'd with great success.
 Thus have I giv'n a sketch of ev'ry place
 Erected for the messages of grace.

Yet here are sev'ral public buildings more
 Which I have never hinted at before.
 As first the Prison-house and Judgment-hall,
 A house which doth for strict attention call.
 A building strong and large, with steeple high,
 Which much attracts the curious trav'ler's eye.
 But were it not for man's degen'rate race
 There would be little use for such a place.

The next a house erected for the poor,
 A place which well deserves high praises sure.
 A spacious dome which like a palace stands,
 Built and supply'd by charitable hands.

Another dome here is of ancient date,
 A little farther up the western gate,
 Erected for the poor, by some good donor,
 Which ought to be recorded to his honour.
 A stately house, with steeple, clock and bell,
 But who the founder was I cannot tell.
 This, by the Town hath lately been repair'd,
 And neither pains nor charges have been spar'd.
 It chiefly now is used for a school,
 Where youth are taught to read by proper rule.

The Shambles next for sale of butcher's ware,
 A stately building is, both large and square,
 One of the best perhaps that can be found
 In any place for many miles around.

Three noble Bridges also, strong and new,
 Built over *Cart*, with great convenience too.

And just below them, lo, a noble breast,
Which for conveniency is not the least.
Here vessels can come to, load and unload
Their goods with ease, both home, and for abroad.
Here also timber-yards exceeding large,
And timber brought without excessive charge.

And just above, on both sides of the river,
Large stacks of mills that grind almost for ever :
And here is also ground all sort of grain,
Large quantities, the people to sustain.
As also one (I likewise must remark)
Erected here for grinding tanner's bark :
For here is also fixt a tannerie,
Which in this place must not omitted be.

Another public building, worthy note,
Erected there, I had almost forgot,
Namely the Store-house for the Baker's grain,
Which doth great quantities thereof contain.
The building's large, high, elegant and strong,
Where all lies safe, secure from ev'ry wrong.
Built on a rock, in pure untainted air ;
Its parallel I know not any where.

Besides these public buildings, many more
For private use, which must be here pass'd o'er,
Lest to their owners I should give offence,
And might be deem'd a bard of little sense ;
Altho' they're worthy of the highest praise,
For much the grandeur of the Town they raise.

Thus have I giv'n a brief and general sketch
Of PAISLEY TOWN, as far as I could reach ;
But one thing more I must not here omit
Which is the best I have recorded yet ;
Namely the Gospel, which is preached here
Intirely pure, from dross and mixture clear.
Nothing is wanting here, that I can see,
But Churches more, and Ministers that be
Like these we have, commission'd from on high
To preach the gospel pure and faithfully.

The CONCLUSION, or APPLICATION.

O PAISLEY! now consider, since the Lord
 Doth unto thee such ample gifts afford:
 Blessings of every kind on thee bestows,
 So wealth and honour on thee daily flows.
 Think now what thankfulness should this excite
 In thee, his loving-kindness to requite.
 Since God hath dealt so bountiful with thee,
 O what a duteous people shouldst thou be!
 Consider what was spoken by our Lord
 Of old, and left upon divine record,
 Against those where his mightiest works were done,
 Because they did his wholesome counsels shun;
 “*Chorazin, and Bethsaida, wo to you,*
 For heavier strokes of vengeance are your due
 Than *Tyre and Sidon*, who ne’er heard nor saw
 Such gospel grace, nor threat’nings of the law:
 Yea, it shall easier be for them, I say,
 Than you at the great awful judgment-day;
 For, had such mighty works in them been done
 As have been done in you, then ev’ry one,
 Had long ago repented, and had loath’d
 Their sinfulness, in dust with sackcloth cloth’d.
 And thou *Capernaum*, rais’d almost to heav’n,
 Down to the lake of hell shalt thou be driv’n;
 For had the mighty works, now done in thee,
 Been done in *Sodom*, in the least degree,
 Until this day it surely had remain’d,
 And fire with brimstone on it ne’er had rain’d.”

Now may it not of PAISLEY thus be said,
 If people here still sinful courses tread?
 It surely will more tolerable be
 For heathen towns, O PAISLEY, than for thee!
 But Heav’n forbid that any people here
 Should ever this tremendous sentence bear,
 Of “Hence depart, go and for ever dwell
 “With devils in the direful lake of hell!”

But better things, my friends, I hope of you,
Tho' this I speak, and thus your danger shew.

O that we all may now in time be wise
To see our danger, and obtain the prize !
The prize immense, eternal in duration,
And purchas'd free in Christ's complete salvation.

But why should I attempt t'enlarge this theme,
Since you are daily taught and warn'd the same ?
My exhortations, therefore, I forbear,
Hoping you will your faithful Pastors hear ;
Nor only hear, but faithfully obey,
So shall you find the sure and perfect way
That leads to heav'n, and everlasting rest,
There may you all eternally be blest.

O may the Pastors and the people meet
In that blest place with joys divinely sweet !
And still may PAISLEY flourish, and increase
In wealth, in honour, and in ev'ry grace,
Ev'n to the end of time : O may it still
Be in God's sight like Zion's holy hill !

Here I must end my honest, weak design,
Hoping you will your candid ears incline
To what is right ; where any thing is wrong,
Pardon the weakness of a mortal's song ;
Knowing that there is no perfection here,
You with a poet's weaknesses will bear.
May peace and happiness our days attend,
And may we all to heav'n at last ascend :
Our diff'rent notions then shall be no more,
But all unite upon that blissful shore.

F I N I S



